

Teaching Elections in a Highly Partisan Era

*Busch Campus Center
Rutgers, The State University
September 27, 2016*

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Bernards Township School District

This Time It's Important

Bernards Township School District

- 5,200 Students
- 4 Elementary, 1 Middle, 1 High School
- Demographics:

School	St Pop	% SE	% ELL	% F&R Lunch	% White	% Asian	% Hispanic	% Black
RHS	1889	14	.3	2.3	73.4	20.3	4	.7
WA	1382	14	.5	2.2	68.3	24.2	4.4	4.4
CH	610	15	.3	2.6	71.3	19.3	4.9	1.6
LC	556	16	.2	2.3	68	20.1	6.7	1.1
MP	687	17	3.6	.9	38.1	49.5	7.6	.7
OS	579	13	.5	4	82.4	6.9	7.5	.7

Religious discrimination or legitimate land use issues?



- ❖ Islamic Society of Basking Ridge (ISBR) applied to build mosque in Liberty Corner, April 2012
- ❖ Bernards Township Planning Commission ultimately rejected proposal, citing land use considerations, December 2015



- ❖ ISBR has sued, claiming Planning Board violated Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA)
- ❖ Currently under investigation

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The Bernardsville News

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2016

Great Conversations • Out & About

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Mosque denial subject of probe

By W. JAMES FISKE
DAILY NEWS

RELATED ITEMS
Bernardsville mosque...
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Bernardsville mosque...

IT has nothing to do with discrimination. It just has everything to do with the quality of life for the neighbors and the immediate area.

JANINE VANCE
Bernardsville mosque...
Bernardsville mosque...
Bernardsville mosque...

AND THEY'RE OFF!

BERNARDSVILLE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE Grant sought for 1700's barn

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SB 1005	15	15	908-996-1000
SB 1006	16	16	908-996-1000
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Activity 1: Perspective Taking

For each scenario:

- Why would a person think this?
- What is their perspective? What experiences might have shaped their perspectives?
- What questions would you ask to understand their perspective?
- What is it about YOUR perspective that might make it difficult for you to understand this person's perspective, *or* make it more likely for you to agree?

Quote 1

Stephanie Silva, 39, of Warwick, R.I., heard all the candidates during the primaries. When she heard Trump, she recalled, *"it was almost as if he was speaking to me. It was almost as if he knew my family's problems."*

Quote 2

As Elizabeth Lynch, an 18-year-old college student from Centennial, Colo., put it simply when explaining her decision to vote for Trump: *"I'm extremely pro-life, so I liked what he said about protecting religious freedom and liberty."*

Quote 3

"We are going to become just another country where our government is basically the babysitter, or we're going to become a country that shows self-sufficiency again like it did when I was a young man," said Pat Acciavatti, 77, of St. Clair Township, Mich. *"The country I grew up in is definitely not the country I live in."*

Quote 4

"My voice obviously wasn't heard in the primaries with the election that was so clearly rigged from the start," said Sarah Hernandez, a Sanders supporter. *"So in order to make my voice heard in the election, I'll be voting for Jill Stein."*

Quote 5

Why I'm voting for Clinton: *"I believe she's evolved back to be the progressive Democrat she used to be, more progressive than her liberal husband.. I'm tired of seeing her confronted by entitled men weighing in on her personal honesty and likability, treating the most admired woman in the world like a woman who's applying to be his secretary."*

Quote 6

... a young white man broke the news to Clinton that his generation is with Bernie Sanders. *"I just don't see the same enthusiasm from younger people for you. In fact, I've heard from quite a few people my age that they think you're dishonest. But I'd like to hear from you on why you feel the enthusiasm isn't there."*

Quote 7

"I know she is smart. She is super-smart. There are very few people who have run for president who are as well informed about the details of foreign and domestic policy as she is. I will vote for Hillary Clinton because I trust that she will have a steady hand on American foreign policy. I will vote for her because I trust that she will shape domestic policies to strengthen our economy and to increase equity."

Activity 2: What if a student says...?

For each scenario:

- Individually, write down your gut reaction.
- Discuss with your group:
 - *How does this challenge your ability to teach students how to think for themselves?*
 - *How does this challenge your ability to focus on teaching students the “electoral process” over the “politics” of the election.*

Scenario 1:

“I don’t understand how anyone with a brain could consider voting for Trump. Especially anyone with brown or black skin - that’s like voting against yourself.”

Scenario 2:

“Clinton is a liar and she sent a lot of classified information through a regular gmail account. I don't see how you can trust a person like that to be president.”

Scenario 3:

“Trump is right - we should build a wall and then round up anyone who came here illegally and anyone who could be a terrorist. At least he has the guts to protect our country.”

Scenario 4:

“If Clinton is our President, we will definitely get attacked. ISIS won’t take a woman president seriously.”

Scenario 5:

Your choice - what's something you think a student will say that you want to be prepared to respond to?

Grade 5

Amanda Hughes, Mount Prospect



Grade 5

Amanda Hughes Mount Prospect

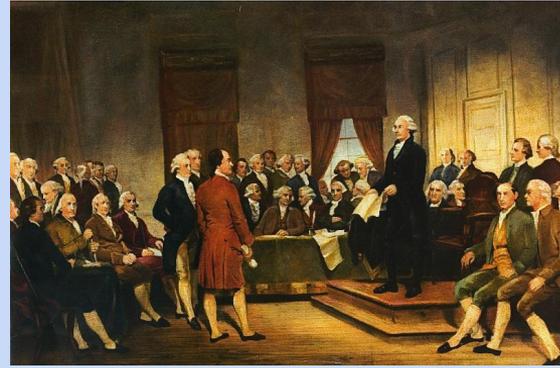


Once there was a group of Politicians that needed help understanding a rather complicated section of the Constitution. After depleting all their resources, judges, College Professors, scholars and historians... they finally decided to call in the experts- Fifth Grade teachers!



Every Year in 5th Grade

- Declaration of Independence
- Constitution
- Bill of Rights
- Election Process
- Electoral College
- Field trip to National Constitution Center in Philadelphia in the Spring



In Election Year

How are you a part of the election process?

Have you read any articles about the election?

Will you go with your parents to vote?

What is a debate?

What issues are you passionate about?

[Scholastic Road to the White House](#)
[Road to the White House Activity Sheet](#)



The Road to the White House

Hop on in your car on <http://election.scholastic.com/election-central/road-to-the-white-house/>

As you follow the Road to the White House stop and answer these questions about the Election Process.



When candidates first start campaigning where do they spend most of their time? Why?



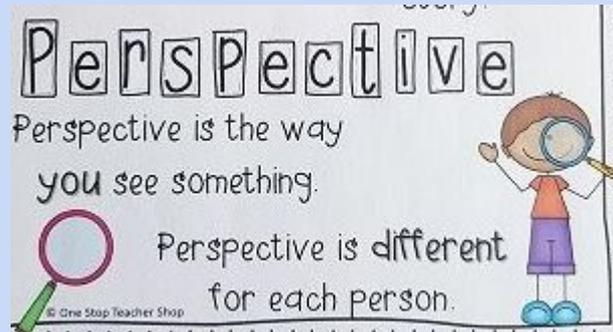
Elementary Perspective Activity

- Display a picture similar to this one for the whole class to see.
- Ask half the class to explain what the mother thinks of the sweater. Other half explains what the son might be thinking.
- Compare answers
- Same Sweater- different thoughts



What does the mom think of the sweater?

What does the son think of the sweater?



Elementary Perspective on the Issues

Education and Criminal Justice

- How does the education you receive affect your future?

Terrorism, Security, and Gun Control

- What is worth fighting for?

Immigration and Refugee Crisis

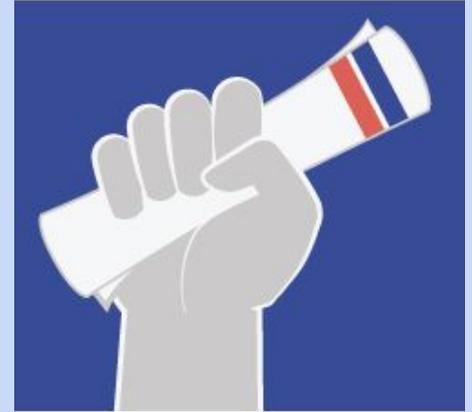
- How can immigration lead to conflict and/or progress?

Health Care and Climate Change

- How does where you live influence how you live?

Gender Equality and Income Inequality

- How do we measure equality?



Elementary Resources

Election Activities

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson396/ElectionWebsites.pdf

Leveled Non-Fiction Articles about the Election

https://newsela.com/articles/#/featured/election-2016?tag=election2016&page_size=27

Student Vote

https://newsela.com/students-vote/?utm_source=nws&utm_campaign=stdvote16&utm_medium=web&utm_content=pm

More Scholastic

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/election-2016-guide-teachers>

<http://election.scholastic.com/election-central/vocabulary/>

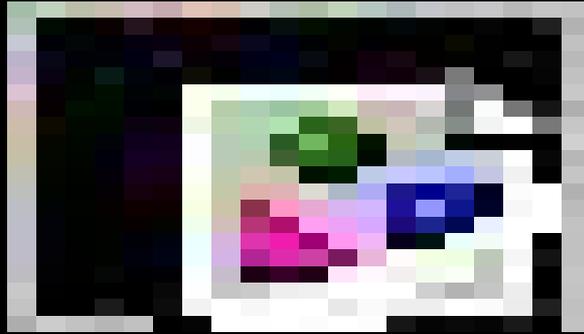
<http://election.scholastic.com/latest-news/>

Resources

- [Read, Write, Think](#)
- [Newsela](#)
- [Scholastic – Free Election Guide](#)
- [Scholastic – Election Vocabulary](#)
- [Scholastic – Latest News](#)
- [Dr. Seuss](#) - Vote for your favorite cause. The Cat in the Hat is running for President as the kids' candidate. Help choose his first order of business. Winning organization will receive \$10,000!
- [Kids Voting USA](#) - Kids Voting USA is a nonpartisan, grassroots-driven voter education program committed to creating lifelong voting habits in children, increasing family communication about citizenship, and

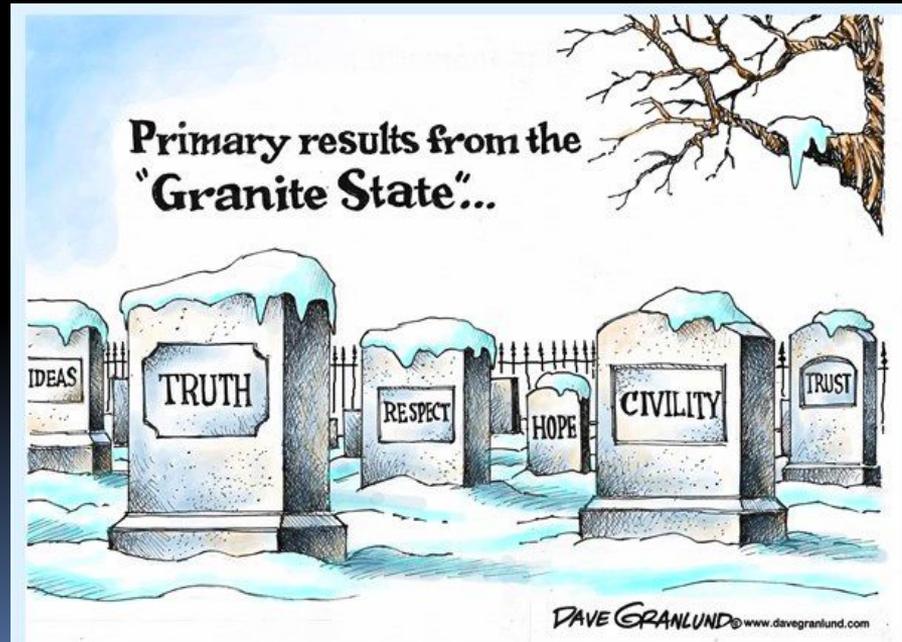
Grade 8

Heather Ferino, William Annin



If you want the truth to stand clear before you, never be for or against. The struggle between “for” and “against” is the mind’s worst disease.

-Sent-ts’an, c. 700 CE



Devil's Advocate

1. **Take a Side**
 - a. Political belief survey
 - b. Find an issue you feel strongest about
2. **Justify Your Position**
 - a. Research and support the argument
3. **Play Devil's Advocate**
 - a. Research and support the opposing position
4. **Argue for the Opposing Side**
 - a. Debate
 - b. Town Hall Meeting (each student has a role)
5. **Reflect**
 - a. Does the argument get stronger when you can see both sides?



Devil's Advocate Resources

- [Understanding the moral roots of liberals and conservatives \(finding truth despite our political leanings\)](#)
- [Survey: Which candidate is right for you?](#)
- [Position Papers of Clinton](#)
- [Position Papers of Trump](#)
- [Town Hall Meeting Format for the Classroom](#)

Grades 11-12

Jennifer Raphaels, RHS





...AND HE
DOESN'T
HAVE ACCESS
TO THE
NUCLEAR
BUTTON YET

CHAPPATE
International New York Times

HILLARY
BENGHAZI
SCANDAL

HILLARY
CLINTON
EMAIL
SCANDAL

CLINTON
FOUNDATION
SCANDAL



Trump Embodies the Rage of the White Middle Class--“Politicians spend no time helping them. Black lives matter more and illegal immigrants who break the law get a free pass. Evangelicals in this country no longer feel they have the right to religious freedom and have watched what they perceive as a sacred institution in marriage gutted. All the while, politicians they voted for to represent them just plain don't.”

1. Clinton's agenda pushes the boundaries of the possible, making measurable change more likely.
2. Clinton's proposals do a far better job of confronting trade-offs and setting priorities.
3. Clinton's policies are rooted in evidence and data, even when the more popular position might have been otherwise.
4. Clinton's ideas are based on building and improving, ensuring that risks to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged are minimized.

The Silent Conversation

Rationale

- Use writing and silence to explore a topic
- Slow down thinking to consider views of others
- Engage less vocal students
- Create a visual representation of thoughts and emotions

Prep - Select Stimulus

Text

Question

Quotation

Historical document

Excerpt from speech

Poem

Student writing

Images

Political cartoon

Data in table/graph
form

Photograph

Artwork

Student image

Prep - Gather materials

- Multi-colored pens/markers
- Large poster paper
- Tape
- Stimuli

Prep - Direct students

- Explain nature of activity
- Stress importance of silence
- Explain goal/rationale of activity
- Practice with a less charged/fun topic

Step 1 - Begin dialogue

- Each pair/group gets one big paper with a stimulus taped to the center
- Students read and reflect silently upon stimulus
- Students react to stimulus
 - Question, comment, concern, connection

Immigration History IN U.S.

started From
the Bottom
Now the

the majority
of people fly
to survive
shoppers at their
home country, but
they can't go
back to it, so they
try to get together
to get out
1984

at what point
does a place = "dead"?

"The road we could follow in Hong Kong
was a dead one. The only future I could see
for us, for you, was here, where you could become
whatever you wanted. Even though this isn't what we
imagined back home, we will be all right." (p. 20)

★ Survival

↑
I agree, starting
a new life is hard
in a new world

Land of
Opportunities

No matter where you
go stay to always keep you
cheer up and stay positive.

↳ Golden
Mountain

The dream of
anyone coming
here is to
accomplish their
goals.
Also having to
adapt.

♡ parents
moving here
from Jamaica
to have a better
life for their
children in
the U.S.

♡ finding the
American
Dream

Step 2 - Exchange stimuli

- Each pair/group gets the marked up big paper of another pair/group
- Students read and reflect silently upon stimulus and initial dialogue
- Students react
 - Respond to a question, react to a comment, evaluate a connection, summarize reactions

Step 3 - Break the silence

- Each pair/group returns to original stimuli and discusses stimuli and written responses of classmates

Step 4 - Debrief

- The value of the activity
- The participation of the students
- The rationale of the activity
- The extent to which students' ideas were reinforced/challenged by the prompt and/or thoughts of others
- Follow-up questions

Variations...

What are your class concerns/issues

- Policy preferences?
- Candidates?
- Ideology?

Additional Resources

[Pew Political Identity Quiz](#)

[Isidewith](#)

[Speak Up for Civility](#)

[Teaching in the Time of Trump](#)

Questions? Comments?



- Will send PowerPoint
- Will send Survey with PD certificate